

**INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' AUTOCRATIC LEADERSHIP STYLE ON STUDENTS'
PERFORMANCE AT KENYA CERTIFICATE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION IN
PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN LARI SUB-COUNTY, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA**

Nzioki Wanza Justine

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DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been presented for award of a degree in any university.

.....
Nzioki W. Justine

E55/61087/2010

This research project was submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.

.....
Dr. Ibrahim Khatete

Senior Lecturer

Department of Educational Administration and Planning

University of Nairobi

.....
Dr. Mari Nelson

Lecturer

Department of Educational Administration and Planning

University of Nairobi

DEDICATION

To my late mother Benedetta and family especially my son Roby and daughter
Collete for moral support.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEO	County Education Officer
DEO	District Education Officer
FAWE	Forum of African Women Educationalists
GoK	Government of Kenya
KESI	Kenya Educational Staff Institute
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
LBDQ	Leader's Behavior Description Questionnaire
MOE	Ministry of Education
NACOSTI	National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America

ABSTRACT

Research has demonstrated that school leaders' leadership styles influence students' performance. The purpose of carrying out this study was to provide empirical evidence that would help in establishing whether autocratic leadership style influence students' academic performance. The objectives of this study were to: establish influence of principals' ways of consulting during decision-making on students' performance; determine the influence of principals' use of interpersonal skills on students' performance; influence of principals' delegation of duties on students' performance and examine the relationship between principals' domineering behaviour and students' performance. The researcher utilised ex-pos facto survey design in the study. The study target population was 40 principals, 521 teachers and 2,520 form four students in 25 public secondary schools in Lari Sub-county. A sample size of 20 principals, 60 teachers and 252 students was arrived at through use simple random sampling techniques. Three sets of questionnaires aided in collecting data for this study. Data were analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Results showed that majority of the principles used autocratic leadership style. The methods of decision-making did not influence tacher performance, communication skills were important and to a large extent influenced students' performance while delegation of duties and principals' domineering behaviour produced mixed results according to participants' views; with teacher reporting negative influence on learners' performance and students indicating no influence on their performance. From the results, students' academic performance was largely predicted by the number of co-curricular activities a student was involved in. It was concluded that principals' leadership style influenced students' performance.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

In recent years, we have been increased research in an attempt to understand organizational dynamics. This is because leadership is one of the most important factors affecting organizational performance (D'Souza, 2007). D'Souza defines leadership as 'focusing on the activity through which the goals and objectives of the organization are accomplished'. D' Souza suggests the basic things that are needed for successful leadership to happen namely; a basic knowledge of group behavior, human relationships, managerial skills and thorough training in applying those skills.

According to Armstrong (2004) leadership is the influence, power and the legitimate authority acquired by a leader to be able to effectively transform the organization through the direction of human resources that are the most important organizational asset, leading to the achievement of desired purpose. Cole (2000) sees leadership as a way of inspiring people to perform. Therefore, leadership is a broader concept of management, which involves working with and through people to achieve results. While for many people the word leadership connotes power, authority, honor, prestige or personal advantage, to others,

leadership involves serving others. This is the true concept of leadership. Leadership seeks to be of service rather than to dominate. It encourages, inspires and respects rather than exploits other personalities.

On the one hand, leadership style is the manner and approach of providing directions, implementing plans and motivating people. In one of the earliest studies on styles of leadership, Kurt (1939) led a group of researchers to identify different styles of leadership. The study established three different types of styles namely; authoritarian (also autocratic), delegative and participative. Autocratic leadership style is characterized by individual control, overall decision-making and little input from group members. Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their own ideas and judgements and rarely accept advice from followers. Leaders dictate all the work methods and processes In autocratic type of leadership, communication is usually described as one way. Leaders say what exactly they want done, in other words, decision-making is usually unilateral. Leaders accomplish goals by directing people (Melling & Little; 2004 Mgbodile, 2004). Though this might sound like poor type of leadership, there are actually situations where this type of leadership style is effective (Ram, 2001).

Autocratic leadership can manifest in different ways. It is therefore not completely rigid and different situations can influence how the organization and the leader

implement the style. The three manifestations are directing autocratic leadership; permissive autocratic leadership; and paternalistic autocratic leadership. These three, while still showcasing the core characteristics of autocratic style, tend to use slightly different ways of approaching the flexibility within the decision-making process. In the work place, some operating conditions may call for urgent action. In such cases, an autocratic style of leadership may be the best style to adopt. In fact, in times of stress or emergency, some subordinates may actually prefer an autocratic style, where they prefer to be told exactly what to do (D' Souza, 2007).

Several studies suggest that organizations with many autocratic leaders have higher turnover and absenteeism (Umeakuka, 2005). There are cases where this type of leadership style only make the work environment worse, for example, in institutions where employees are struggling with low morale or are interested in building employee relationships. This type of leadership style should not also be used where a leader would wish to engage employees in decision-making process. It is also a poor methods to use where institutions wish to empower employees who have just entered the work force (Nwankwo, 2001). Effective leaders use all the three styles with one of them normally dominating, while bad leaders tend to stick to one style. Performance at national examinations in both public secondary schools may depend on the type of leadership style upheld by the headteachers.

Generally, the public lays blame of poor performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) on headteachers' poor management and leadership style (Bukachi & Nyarova, 1995; Osiako, 1983). Griffins (1996) contented that inadequate leadership has brought down schools. According to the Forum of African Women Educationalists (FAWE) (1997), performance in public examinations is greatly influenced by the head teachers' management practices that are influenced by their leadership styles. Research studies by Achola (1990) and Keeves (1992) found that schools' headteachers' and teachers' variables had a substantial effect on the student achievement not only in sciences but also in the other subjects in public examinations. For this to happen, the head teacher should have a good system of supervision. Bredeson (2006) argued that the principal is the major component of school administration on whose ability and skill, personality and professional competence is largely depend on for the tone and efficiency of the school. Good leadership is indispensable if an organization is to be successful. Head teachers must therefore manage and lead effectively in order to influence their teachers towards the accomplishment of their school's objectives."

Head teachers are expected to be highly skilled in order to reconcile and utilize constructively different abilities, viewpoints, attitudes and ideas in the performance of group task especially good examination performance (Chirchir, Kemboi, Kirui & Ngeno, 2014). While trying to accomplish school goals, the head

teachers ought to satisfy the needs of school members. Commenting on the relationship between the leader and organizational members, Aziz (2013) stated that the leader is most successful when he represents the desire and purpose of his followers. Head teachers need to demonstrate friendship, mutual trust, respect and warmth in their relationships with the teachers in order to gain their commitment and co-operation. This is because the quality of education programs depend on motivation and competence of teachers (Kibe, 1996) and the head teacher is viewed from all directions as the leader of the school, and the community will hold him/her responsible if he/she does not lead (Roe & Drake, 1974). Therefore, secondary schools principals need to be very skillful in employing appropriate leadership styles that draw co-operation and commitment from teachers who are significant in ensuring students excel in KCSE.

According to Pareek (2010) the school structure has encouraged authoritarian administration. Head teachers need to employ appropriate leadership styles in dealing with various challenges facing secondary schools and in improving general performance in KCSE. In Uganda, a study about secondary schools was carried out by Nsubuga (2008) which sought to analyze the leadership styles of head teachers and school performance. The study established that effective schools performance not only requires visionary leadership, but also transformative type of leadership, which is highly recommended for educational leaders.

Lewin (2004) argues that inefficient leadership results to loss of much learning time each year in poorly managed schools. In education institutions, leadership is thus a dynamic process, which means that an individual is not only responsible for the group's task but also actively seeks the collaborations and commitment of all group members in achieving group goals in a particular context (Cole, 2002). Cole further remarks that even if an institution has all the financial resources to excel, it may fail dismally if the leadership does not motivate others to accomplish their tasks effectively.

Namirembe (2005) remarks that many schools in Kenya still lack the necessary performance requirement not only because of inadequate funds or even poor facilities but because of poor leadership. Improvement in performance requires that schools are well led by competent school heads. This study endeavoured to establish whether there is any relationship between principals' autocratic type of leadership and students performance in KCSE in Lari District, Kiambu County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study on the influence of autocratic leadership style and students' performance at KCSE is undertaken at a time when there is a national clamor from all education stakeholders over the poor quality of educational outputs (Oketch & Ngware, 2012; Oluremi, 2013; Odhiambo, 2012; Osangie & Okafor, 2013; Orodho, 2014). Part of the blame for the poor performance has been directed

towards school principals and the teachers while some portion has been put placed on the students themselves and the parents (Sawamuran & Sifuna, 2008; Oluremi, 2012; Osangie& Okafor, 2013; Orodho, 2013). Kiambu County is no exception, especially Lari Sub-County. Information procured from the District Educational Offices in Lari Sub-County in 2017 shows that KCSE performance in the Sub-County is poor, with the district mean score of 3.46 out of a possible 12 points. For over a decade, many schools had been scoring a mean ranging between 2 and 5. This scenario could be attributed to the poor leadership practices in the schools. There is a strong link between leadership and good examination results. Therefore, this study wished to determine the relationship between autocratic leadership style and KCSE performance in Lari Sub-County.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of principals' autocratic leadership style and KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Lari Sub-County.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

- i. To establish the relationship between principals' methods of consultation with their teachers in decision making and students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools in Lari sub-county.

- ii. To analyze the influence of principals' use of communication skills on students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools in Lari sub-county.
- iii. To examine if headteachers' delegation of duties influences students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools in Lari sub-county.
- iv. To assess if the principals' domineering behavior influences students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools in Lari sub-county.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study

- i. What is the relationship between principals' methods of consultation with their teachers in decision making and students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools in Lari sub-county?
- ii. What is the influence of the principals' communication skills on students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools in Lari sub-county?
- iii. To what extent does the principals' delegation of their duties influence students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools at Lari sub-county?

- iv. What is the influence of principals' domineering behavior in decision making on students' performance at KCSE in public secondary schools Lari sub-county?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The research findings of this study may be useful in training school leaders in management and leadership skills during their pre-service and in-service training. The study may be relevant in ensuring future principals are equipped with appropriate, flexible leadership styles that may help in creating learning environments that would facilitate high academic performance among learners.

Institutions offering management training program such as Kenya Educational Staff Institute (KESI) have also benefited from the study by using the findings in designing post teacher training programs for schools administrators.

The findings of this study was used to highlight the need of principals in training in management and leadership in order to improve on their performance.

The research findings of this study was useful in helping principals to reexamine and upraise their own leadership styles and adjust where necessary to affect academic performance in their school Additional information that was obtained through this study and formed part of literature to scholars who are interested in researching on this area.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The limitation of this study concerned the attitude of the respondents. The researcher was not in a position to control the attitudes of the respondents and this affected the validity of their responses. The respondents gave socially acceptable answers just to please the researcher. However, the researcher assured respondents on anonymity of responses and confidentiality of information to encourage openness.

1.8 Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study was delimited in a number of ways. The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Lari district only. The study was restricted to principals' autocratic leadership styles and ignored any other factors that may affect students' performance. The study was also be limited to school principals disregarding other administrators in the schools management structures such as the Board of Management members, Parents Associations, Deputy Principals' and student councils.

1.9 Basic Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on the following basic assumptions:

- i. That the respondents interpreted the items in the questionnaires correctly and provided accurate responses.

- ii. That KCSE results was a valid and a reliable measure of students' academic performance.

1.10 Definitions of Significant Terms

The following are definitions of significant terms and concepts as used in the study:

Autocratic leadership style refers to means that the leader makes decisions unilaterally without regard for the subordinates.

Domineering behaviour refers to a leader overbearing characteristics such as being bossy.

Communication skills refer to ways in which messages are passed from the sender to the recipient.

Consultation in decision-making refers to the process of discussing something with someone in order to get their advice or opinion about it.

Delegation of duties is the assignment of any responsibility or authority to another person (normally from a manager to a subordinate) to carry out specific activities.

Leadership style refers to characteristic ways in which a given leader relates to subordinates in the performance of tasks assigned to the group.

1.11 Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One consists of background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions significance of the study, limitations of the study, delimitations of the study, basic assumptions of the study and definitions of significant terms. Chapter Two entails literature related to the study that is organised thematically according to study objectives. This includes principals, methods of consultation in decision-making and students' performance; principals' communication skills and students' performance; principals' delegation of duties and students' performance; and principals' domineering behavior and students' performance. Chapter Three, research methodology, covers research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments used in research; their reliability and validity, data collection procedures, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations. Chapter Four involves data analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings. Chapter Five provides a summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores literature related to the study topic which is organised thematically according to study objectives. This includes headteachers' methods of consultation with teachers in decision making and students' performance; headteachers' use of interpersonal skills and students' performance; headteachers' lack of delegation of duties and students' performance; and headteachers' domineering behavior and students' performance. A summary of reviewed literature, theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study are also presented.

2.2 The Concept of Students Performance and School Leadership

Students' academic performance is important to an individual, a family, a school and the nation at large. For a school to achieve high performance both in curricular and in co-curricular activities, effective leadership is needed (Cole, 2004). Most study results have indicated a strong relationship between effective leadership style and student achievement. For instance, Waters, Marzano, and Mcnulty (2003) argue that leadership in a school affects students' academic achievement. Hurley (2001) also posits that a school principal is the answer to high academic performance of the students. He opines that an effective principal creates a conducive environment that stimulates enthusiasm for learning. A leader should

motivate a group of people to achieve its tasks and maintain team unity throughout the process (Sheikh, 2001). A leader unifies, embodies the opinion of the people to any desired goals (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2000). According to Sushila (2004), many aspects of the school revolve around the principal, who is the school leader and the person in charge of running academic and administrative aspects of the school.

Bolarinwa (2013) and Nsubuga (2008) state that autocratic leadership occurs in a situation where the manager retains most authority for himself or herself and makes decisions with a view to ensuring that the staff implements it. The autocratic leader's authority emanates more from the office than from personal attributes. Bolarinwa and Nsubuga characterise the autocratic leader as an authoritarian. He directs group members on the way things should be done and issues orders without explanation which he expects should be obeyed whether or not the members of staff have initiative (Russell & Stone, 2002). All powers in an organisation are concentrated in his hands such that when he is away, it would be difficult for the staff to know what to do. Okumbe (1998) and Tuitoek, Yambo, and Adhanja (2015) add that school principals who use this kind of leadership do not give room to participation in decision-making. They unilaterally make decisions, are task oriented, hard on workers, keen on schedules, and expect people to do what they are told without much debate. Such principals are

influenced by the scientific management approach. They ascribe to McGregor's Theory X that presumes that people are naturally lazy and need close supervision. In schools where this style is used, the staff, students or subordinates lack motivation and they show less involvement in their work.

However, autocratic leadership style is not without benefits. According to Bennis (2013), one merit of autocratic leadership is that workers are compelled to work quickly for high production. Since work is strictly structured and is always done following certain set of procedures (Okumbe, 1998), it may be assumed that principals who employ autocratic leadership style get high performance in their schools since there is close supervision of teachers and students. Deadlines may also be met at appropriate time. Autocratic leadership can also be beneficial in some instances, such as when decisions need to be made quickly without consulting with a large group of people (Cherry, 2015). Some projects also require strong leadership in order to get things accomplished quickly and efficiently. In stressful situations, such as during military conflicts, group members may actually prefer an autocratic leader. This allows members of the group to focus on performing specific tasks without worrying about making complex decisions.

2.3 Principals' Consultation Methods in Decision Making and Students' Performance

As school leader, each decision you make has the potential to have a lasting impact within your school and beyond. Competing viewpoints, priorities and strong personalities contribute to the difficulty many leaders have with making decisions. The centrality of the role and influence of the principal's in shared decision-making cannot be over-emphasized. Blase and Blase,(2000) pointed out the need for research addressing the personal and professional socialization factors linked to the development of head teachers' perspectives on shared governance and leadership. Consultative decision-making is conceived as an aspect of shared leadership, and the idea of involving teachers in school-level decision-making is known by many names. Several scholars including Kahrs, 1996; Marks and Louis, 1997; Reitzug, 1994; Rice and Schneider, 1994, have studied teacher empowerment as concept that is related to teacher participation in decision-making. While participative decision-making is a system or structure, teacher empowerment represents an internal perception by teachers of having increased authority in their positions. According to Rinehart and Short (1998), primarily, empowerment has been defined as a process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems.

Effective involvement of teachers and students adds significant value to schools' decision-making processes, promotes early student engagement (and connection) with public and community life and provides students with essential life skills. In short, participatory decision-making benefits everyone involved – students, staff, parents, and communities. Effective participation in decision-making involves creating opportunities for children and young people to increase their influence over what happens to them and around them. Students can participate in school decision-making at different levels, involving different groups of students and facilitated by a wide range of processes, formal and informal. It means involving children and young people not only by asking for their opinions and advice (consultation), but also, with school support, as leaders, advisers and decision-makers (UNESCO, 2003).

Student participation in decision making refers to the work of student representative bodies - such as school councils, student parliaments and the prefectorial body. It is also a term used to encompass all aspects of school life and decision-making where students may make a contribution, informally through individual negotiation as well as formally through purposely-created structures and mechanisms. Student participation also refers to participation of students in collective decision-making at school or class level and to dialogue between students and other decision-makers, not only consultation or a survey among

students. Student participation in decision making in schools is often viewed as problematic to school administrators, parents and society at large. This is often due to the fact that students are viewed as minors, immature and lacking in the expertise and technical knowledge that is needed in the running of a school. Thus student participation in decision making is often confined to issues concerned with student welfare and not in core governance issues.

Autocratic leadership can manifest in different ways. It is therefore not completely rigid and different situations can influence how the organization and the leader implement the style. The three manifestations are; directing autocratic leadership, permissive autocratic leadership, and paternalistic autocratic leadership. These three, while still showcasing the core characteristics of autocratic style, tend to use slightly different ways of approaching the flexibility within the decision-making process.

Two aspects of leadership have been used most frequently in the study of school management (Flatter & Preedy, 1988). There is initiating structure referring to the leader's behaviour in delineating the relationship between him and the subordinates and channels of communication and methods of procedure. The other aspect refers to behaviour which is indicative of mutual trust, respect and warmth and relationship between the leader and his staff (Halpin 1966; Rishes & Masterton, 1988). Mias (1980) expounded the view further by putting it clearly

that decentralization of decisions does not necessarily increase job satisfaction among teachers. Nevertheless, teachers generally responded well to what he calls positive leadership but negatively to authoritarian leadership.

Democratic and autocratic types of leadership can be viewed as contrasting, but the effective one depends on a leader's personality and the situation under which it is applied. The school's structure has encouraged authoritarian administration and so the relationship between the head teachers and the teachers is paternalistic; resembling a benevolent despotism rather than a democracy (Graham 1969). This study will set out to determine if autocratic type of leadership among principals affects students' academic performance.

2.4 Principals' Delegation Practices and Students' Performance

Delegation refers to the process of entrusting authority and responsibility to other people. In its strictest form, the person to whom authority is delegated acts on behalf of the one from whom authority is delegated. Generally, delegated authority gives the recipients fairly wide powers to act as they consider it appropriate (Farrant, 1980). The main reason for delegation in schools emanates from the fact that the task of running a school is too broad a responsibility for one person to manage alone. Regardless of the number of hours one may invest in one's work, one cannot succeed in completing the work alone. However, no matter how many

hours one puts into one's work. There are too many tasks and too many people to deal with, so the workload has to be shared (Musaaazi 1982).

In order to succeed, the manager should delegate authority by entrusting others to do parts of their jobs. Delegation of authority therefore means subdivision and sub-allocation of authority and powers downwards to the subordinates in order to achieve effective results. Cole (1996) describes delegation as a process whereby a leader or a senior officer cedes or entrusts some of his authority to subordinates or teammates to perform certain tasks or duties on his behalf. However, the manager or the senior officer remains accountable for those tasks or duties to his own superior officers. In turn, effective delegation produces benefits for the organization by:

- Allowing more people to be actively involved
- Distributing the work load more evenly
- Helping an organization or committee run more smoothly and efficiently

Most leaders have some difficulty delegating responsibility. Most often they would prefer to do the task themselves to make sure the "job gets done right." While this method can be more expedient, it can also breed apathy among non-involved, unmotivated members eventually resulting in the loss of members. Sharing your authority with others can be the greatest single motivator in retaining members and strengthening the organization.

According to Mbiti (1979), effective delegation leads to realization of school objectives. If head teachers delegate some of their responsibilities to teachers, teachers feel motivated and even own the schools decisions (Mungai, 2001). Mungai further states that lack of delegation demotivates teachers. Lieberman (1990) puts it clearly that teachers are most often centered participants only about decisions in their own classrooms and are rarely parties to school level decision making and their voices are not heard. The administrative structure of the school and the top management approach gives the head teachers absolute power which makes them dictators often accountable to nobody (Katz & Khan 1966).

Schools dominated by such power- driven head teachers will find their policy decisions moving towards a direction of those heads rather than towards the healthy development of the school (Jensen and Shuman 1992). Apart from directing and influencing subordinates, leadership also has the responsibility of developing the competence of subordinates by providing opportunities for them to take risks and act in various capacities. One of the major tools of doing this is delegation of responsibilities. No leader, no matter how competent, can do all the work alone; his responsibilities are always greater than his personal capacity to carry them out (Collin, 1989; Mulder, 2001). Leaders need to delegate parts of their responsibilities and authority to their subordinates. Delegation of responsibilities is a primary leadership tool; a process that allows supervisors to

share some of their assigned responsibilities with subordinates, thereby gaining valuable time to complete other assignments (Eraut, 2004).

Delegation not only frees leaders for more important things, but can motivate competent subordinates. Leaders must be careful not to delegate too much. Angst and Browieck (2013) opined that ineffective leaders delegate nothing, the mediocre leaders delegate everything, while the effective leaders delegate selectively. Leaders must delegate as much as practically possible while retaining control over key result areas, so as to enable them monitor the result.

Delegation empowers a subordinate to make decisions; it is a shift of decision-making authority from a higher organisational level to a lower one. Delegation if properly done is not abdication. In general, delegation is good and can save money and time, help in building skills and motivate people. Poor delegation, on the other hand, might cause frustration and confusion to all the involved parties (Ahmed & Jensen, 2009; Angst & Browieck, 2013).

2.5 Principals' Ways of Communication and Student' Performance

There is a strong belief among educationists that principals can improve the teaching and learning environment by creating conditions conducive to improved learner performance (Kiat, Tan, Heng, & Lim-Ratnam, 2017; Early, 2013; Yu,

2009). They are responsible for creating positive school climates, motivating teachers and learners; and effectively managing resources to enhance best instructional practices. Thus, principals play a key role in the development and maintenance of academic standards which include the knowledge and skills that learners are expected to learn in a subject and in each grade (Shelton, 2011). They cannot achieve this without promoting positive behaviours and interactions among teachers and learners (Hoy & Hoy, 2009).

Strong hierarchical style reduces creativity or participative approach to management (Sayer 1989). Glatter and Masterton (1988) add that a rigid hierarchical emphasis can make the realization of genuine collegial relationship very difficult. There is need for good inter personal relations in schools if schools objectives had to be realized and consequently good examination performance (Hughes 1975). Head teachers therefore need to be innovative enough and create opportunities for informal meetings with their staff. Hall and Hall (1988) notes that schools cannot ignore the fact that relationships affect performance, either academic or professional. This study will seek to establish how autocratic school principals relate with their subordinates and how that relationship affects academic performance among students in public secondary schools.

This focuses on what leaders do, not what they are. The most extensive and successful research in leadership categories of behavior was the 1945 Ohio university studies by Organ and Bateman (1991). In the Ohio studies, a list of approximately 1800 items that describe categories of leader's behavior was developed (Hemphill and Coons 1950). The items were used to develop the first form of Leader's Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ).

According to a study carried out in Ohio University, two distinct styles of leadership were developed namely Job- centered and Employee centered. According to this study, job centered leaders used close supervision, legitimate and coercive power, meeting schedules and they evaluated work performance. On the other hand employee centered leaders emphasized on delegation of responsibility; they showed sincere concern for the employees' welfare including their personal needs and professional advancement (Smith 1982). Kurt 1960 carried out a study where 11 year old boys were subjected to different types of leadership, that is, authoritarian, democracy and Laissez fair.

The study established that the authoritarian leader was very directive, did not entertain participation, only paid attention when he was being praised or criticized and tried as much as possible not to portray hostility openly. The Democratic leaders encouraged group discussion and decision making and objectively

praised or criticized the group. The laissez fair leader gave freedom to the group but essentially higher degree of initiative, morale, cohesiveness, freedom of action and work quality. The boys under authoritarian leader were more productive, more defendant, less creative and low morale. The boys got frustrated to an extent that at times they would even leave the group. Mbiti (1974) authoritarian leadership is imposed upon the group through coercion, but does not derive its legitimacy from the governed.

On the other hand, democratic leadership derives its powers and authority from the governed. According to Getzel's and cuba's (1957) nomothetic and idiographic styles, idiographic which is also the personal dimension consists of the personality characteristics of the personnel and their needs dispositions. This style according to Ireri (2003), argued that a specific goal can be achieve by being supportive of the personal needs of the workers. This creates an environment where n individuals performed willingly hence productivity would be at the highest. Transactional leadership style is where there is a fair balance between the role and personality dimensions (Campell, 1983). This is practiced in most schools.

Njuguna (1988) carried out a study on the relationship between head teachers leadership styles and students KCSE performance in Nairobi Province. He observed that considerate head teachers expressed appreciation for the work done,

stressed the importance of job satisfaction, maintained and strengthened self-esteem of subordinate by treating them fairly, being easily approachable and above all considers suggestion from the subordinates. Njuguna goes ahead to argue that in considerate supervisors criticized subordinate in public, treated them without considering their feelings and even threatening their security. Such supervisors do not accept suggestion or even explain their actions.

According to behavioral styles approach, leaders are made and not born, which is right opposite of the Trait theory approach. The Path goal theory (Evans, 1970) proposed that if a leader acts in a considerate manner and provides direction in a way that clarifies the paths, people can use to achieve goals and at the same time people are made aware that rewards are contingent depending on the performance.

According to Ukeje, (1992), tasks should be structured and interaction between the leader and the subordinate should be strengthened to ensure a facilitated movement along the path to task performance. All in all leaders should know unique situations call for unique leadership styles;

Glatter et al (1988).

2.6 Principals' Domineering Behaviour and Students' Performance

According to a series of studies conducted by Ohio State University (1945) on leadership, a Leader Behavior Discipline Questionnaire (LBDQ) was developed. This was to enable analyze leadership behavior in numerous types of groups and situations. From this study, two leader behaviors emerged dominantly, that is, consideration and initiating structure. These two dimensions of leader behaviors were oriented to form four (4) leadership behavioral styles. They are; LL — Low consideration- High initiating structure and HH- High consideration- High initiating structure.

A leader who is high in structure but low in consideration devotes attention to getting the job done and ignores the human element. Leaders with high consideration and low initiating structure are ineffective leaders with “Ooze with the milk” of human kindness, but contribute little to effectiveness. The leader who is high in both consideration and initiating structure strives to achieve a productive balance between getting the job done and maintaining a cohesive friendly group. Finally a leader who is low in the two dimensions strives to achieve passivity by allowing the situation to take care of itself (Fleishman and Hunt 1973). Some studies found that high scores on both dimensions correlated positively with high performance and satisfaction while others found negative outcomes.

Keeler and Andrews carried a study in the relation of principal's leadership to pupil performance to staff consciousness in Canadian Schools. He (Keeler) established that both consideration and initiating structure by the Principals were directly related to the pupil's examination scores.

A study carried out by Kunt (1974) established that those teachers who perceived their principals as good in initiating structure and consideration complied with their principal's directives. On the other hand, those teachers who perceived their principals as being weak in initiating structure and are strong in consideration did not comply with their principals directives.

There seemed to be a positive link between consideration and subordinate satisfaction, Korman (1966). It has also been noted that leadership styles that stress both initiating structure and consideration give more job satisfaction. (Olembo 1992). Leaders need to put more emphasis on considerate behavior towards high performing subordinates and emphasize considerate behavior towards low performing subordinates, Barrow (1976). All in all, the most suitable style depends on the prevailing situation. (Glatter (1988).

The influence of HT leadership styles on students' performance. Schools that performed considerably well tend to have a sound and effective leadership, Eshien

(1983). According to Njuguna (1988) the success or failure of an organization depends on many factors, among them the leadership of many leaders. Ukeje (1992) supports this by saying that the quality of leadership in an organization affects to large extent the success or failure of that organization. Ukeje goes ahead to explain that head teachers leadership styles affect the performance of a particular school in examinations.

Hersey and Blanchard share this view when they point out that dynamic and effective leadership are major attributes that differentiate a successful institution from unsuccessful one. The two attribute organizational failures to in effective leadership. Griffin (1996) attributes good examinational performance to among others, a good atmosphere, the skill and devotion of teachers. However, a good atmosphere cannot be achieved without the appreciation of appropriate leadership styles (Njuguna 1998).

While reviewing research on effective schooling, Duigram (1986) identified school leadership as a crucial factor in the performance of the school. Mias (1980) noted that decentralization of decisions did not necessarily increase job satisfaction of teachers. However, the teachers responded well to what is called positive leadership but negatively to authoritarian leadership. This in turn can affect student K.C.S.E performance. Dulignan (1986) identified school leadership as a crucial

factor in the success of the school. He further identified elements that constitute effective leadership by the schools principals as an atmosphere of order which in turn creates a climate of right expectation for staff and students encouraging collegial and collaborative relationships and building commitments of school goals among students and teachers.

Kathuri (1986) found that there was a strong correlation between the quality of administration in a particular school and performance of a particular school. Kathuri further noted that sound leadership influenced the morale among teachers and students. According to Kariuki (1998) in his study, female head teachers are authoritative dictators in attempt to protect their positions and also have their influences felt.

2.7 Summary of Literature Review

Review of literature in this study is discussed under the following sub- topics:

Leadership and decision- making practices, delegation practices and school administrative structure, inter-relational practices, leader behavior and lastly leadership dimensions.

2.8 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the assumption that effective use of autocratic leadership style would lead to motivated teachers thus improved

students' performance. On the other hand, poor autocratic leadership practices would demotivate teachers leading to poor professional performance hence poor academic performance among students.

Figure 2.1 provides a diagrammatic representation of the study variables showing their possible interactions.

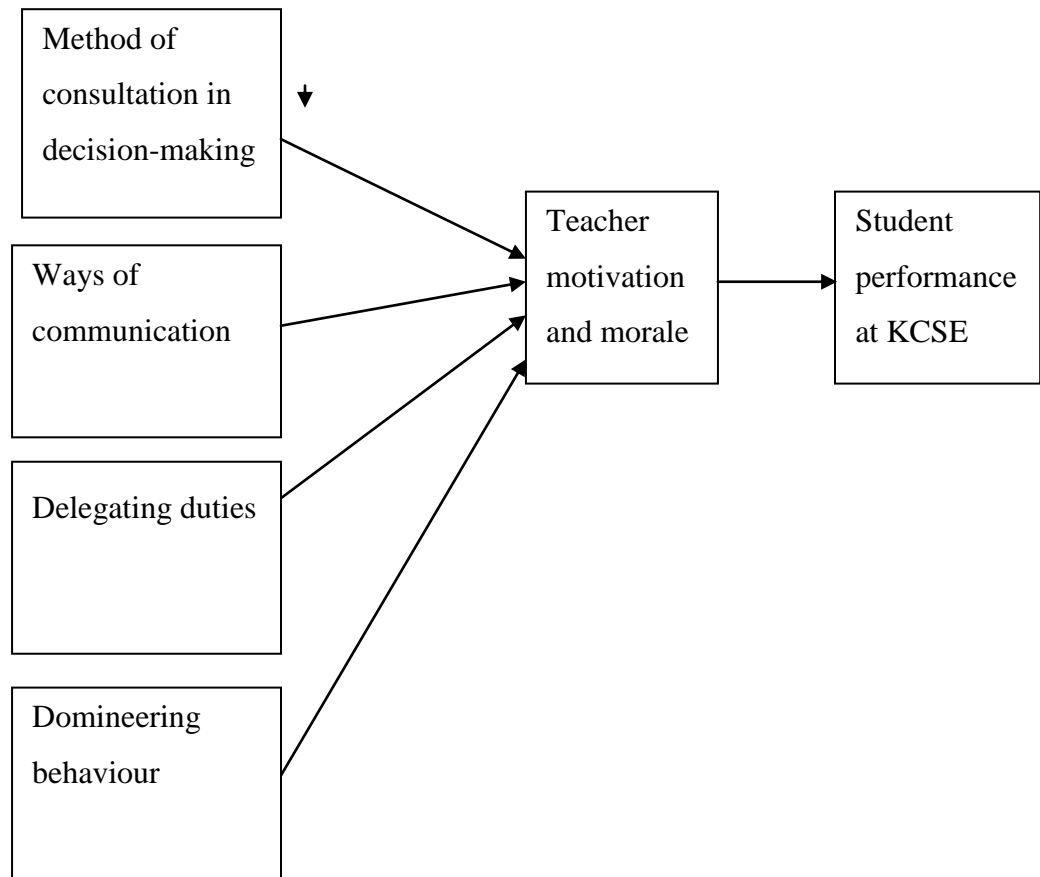


Figure 2.1: Interrelatedness of the study variables

In analysing the interrelatedness among the study variables, it is important to understand the conceptual relationship among independent and dependent variables. In the study, methods of decision-making, communication skills,

delegation of duties and domineering behaviour (independent variables) form the inputs. They are significant in that acting on and operating through teachers' motivation and morale (process) they impact on the students' academic performance either positively or negatively (dependent variable) that constitutes the study output.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a description of the research design that was used in the carrying out the study. It gives a description of the target population, sample size and sampling procedures, description of research instruments, pilot study, instrument validity and reliability. In addition, methods of data collection, data analysis techniques and ethical considerations are presented.

3.2 Research Design

This study used ex-post facto design. According to Charles (1998) the cause, which is the independent variable in ex-post facto research, cannot be manipulated because it is genetically fixed (for example sex and age), or circumstances do not allow manipulation of variables because it has already occurred. An ex-post facto design was selected for this study because the principals had already exhibited their autocratic behaviour and students' performance have already been measured at KCSE.

3.3 Target Population

The target population for this study was 40 principals, 521 teachers and 2,520 form four students in the 40 public secondary schools in Lari Sub-County. According to the Ministry of Education (2018) report, there were 40 public

secondary schools that had registered as KCSE examination centers by 2017 in Lari Sub-county.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Kothari (2009) states that a sample size of between 10% to 20% of the population is considered adequate for detailed or in depth studies. The sample size of this study was therefore derived from 20% of 40 principals teachers which was 20, 10% of 521 teachers which resulted to 53 teachers and 10% (252) of the 2,520 form four students. Simple random sampling techniques without replacement were used to select secondary schools of which the principals became automatic study participants. In addition, three teachers were randomly selected from each sampled school that slightly increased the study sample from 53 to 60. About 12 students were selected from each sampled school from the Form Four student.

3.5 Research Instruments

Three sets of semi-structured questionnaires were used in conducting this study. They included questionnaires for principals, teachers and students. The researcher developed all the instruments. All the questionnaire were self-administered. The questionnaire were designed in such a way that they consisted both open and closed questions with most closed questions adopting Likert scales as the chosen measurement. The open-ended questions aimed at soliciting demographic information of the respondents and gave them opportunity to express their views on various issues related autocratic leadership and learner performance. A

questionnaire reduces bias, enhances credibility and is important in gathering of primary data from a large number of participants within a short time-frame.

3.6 Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to that quality of a data gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to measure what it is supposed to measure (Best & Kahn, 2011). Best and Kahn (2011) and Borg and Gall (2003) assert that validity of an instrument is improved through expert judgement. If data collection instruments adequately cover the topics that have been defined as relevant dimensions, the instrument has good content validity (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). To further enhance validity of the questionnaires, a pre-test was conducted on a population similar to the target population. The neighbouring Kikuyu Sub-County was selected for pre-testing of the instruments. A 10% of the sample was used in the pre-test (Mudenda,2007). To further improve validity of the instruments, the researcher consulted university lectures who are experts in the area of educational administration and incorporated their advice in refining the instruments.

3.7 Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. To do this the researcher used test-retest method to ascertain reliability. The researcher will administer the instruments to the sampled respondents and again after a span of two weeks. The researcher then computed the scores of the two tests for each individual then

correlate the two sets of scores. Spearman Brown prophecy formulae was used to make this correlation. The formula is presented below.

$$R_e = \frac{2r}{1+r}$$

R_e =reliability coefficient

R =the reliability

Values of between 0.73 and 0.81 were obtained for all the three instruments which were considered highly reliable (Hinkle, Wiersma & Jurs, 2003).

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Before fieldwork, the researcher obtained a research clearance letter from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning and a permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Before the field study, the researcher sent introductory letters to all principals of the sampled schools informing them of the intended visits to collect data. The researcher further made follow-up courtesy calls to all the principals to book appointments on when to collect data. On the day of data collection, the researcher reported to the Sub-County Director of Education office to inform of the data collection exercise. In each school, the researcher first reported to the principal's office for assistance in the identification of teachers and selection of students who participated in the study. The students and teachers completed the questionnaires in a classroom while the principal in the office.

3.9 Data Analysis Techniques

This study aimed at establishing the relationship between principals' autocratic leadership and students' performance as measured by KCSE grade scores. The researcher first scrutinised the data collection instruments to determine whether an acceptable return rate was achieved. Data analysis involved developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques. Qualitative data were analysed by categorising and indexing responses into common themes. Quantitative data were analysed by use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer programme Version 23. Descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages were calculated to characterize variables. Chi-square test of independence was used to measure relationship between the independent and dependent variables at a 0.05 level of significance. Results were presented in frequency tables and textual form.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

In order to meet ethical standards in research, the researcher sought for a research permit from the NACOSTI; carried out the necessary pre-field work logistics such as pre-testing the instruments and making the sampling frame to identify the study participants before fieldwork. The researcher then visited secondary schools to inform the participants the purpose of the study, their role and then sought their informed consent to participate. The researcher ensured confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four contains statistical analysis, interpretation and presentation of the findings as they relate to each study objective and research question. The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and KCSE performance in Lari sub-county. Specifically, the study sought to: establish the relationship between principals' methods of consultation in decision making and students' performance at KCSE; and analyzed the influence of principals' use of interpersonal skills on students' performance at KCSE. In addition, the study investigated if principals' lack of delegation of duties to their subordinates affects students' performance at KCSE and assessed the influence of principals' domineering behavior on students' performance at KCSE. Data are presented in sections that are aligned with the research questions. Descriptive statistics of the study variables are presented first followed by inferential statistics.

4.2 Instrument Return Rate

The researcher visited all the 20 sampled public secondary schools to collect data by use of semi-structured questionnaires. The researcher was able to reach the principals, teachers and students. The response rates are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Instruments return rate

Instrument Type	Respondent Category	Sample size	Frequency	Percent
Questionnaires	Students	252	248	98.4
	Teachers	60	51	83.3
	Principals	20	20	100.0

Out of 252 questionnaires distributed to the sampled form four students, 248 were usable. This was after excluding 4 questionnaires that had more than 20 percent missing items giving a response rate of 98.4 percent. In addition, 51 (83.3 %) and 20 (100.0%) teachers and principals filled out questionnaires respectively. The high response rate was partly due to the school context in which the instruments were administered. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009), a response rate of 70 percent and over is excellent. The researcher realised an excellent instruments' return rate of over 70 percent with each category of respondents; which was suitable for analysis.

4.3 Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Socio-demographic data of the participants comprised their gender, age, religion, academic qualifications and years of work experience as appropriate for each

category. Such variables help the researchers to compare study populations with their cohorts and to look for possibilities of generalising results to other cohorts. The analysis helped in putting the responses in context. Descriptive statistics on principals and teachers characteristics are presented in Table 4.2 and 4.3.

Table 4.2: Distribution of principals by selected demographic characteristics

Demographic	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	8	40.0
	Female	12	60.0
Age (years)	Below 30	0	0.0
	31 -40	4	20.0
	41 – 50	7	35.0
	Over 50	9	45.0
Highest professional qualification	B.Ed	7	35.0
	M.Ed	13	65.0
Years as principal	Below 5	1	5.0

6 - 10	2	10.0
11 -15	4	20.0
16 - 20	10	50.0
Over 20	3	15.0

Marital status

Single	4	20.0
Married	16	80.0

n = 20

Table 4.2 indicates that among the 20 principals who participated in the study, 40.0 percent and 60.0 percent of them were male and female respectively.

Majority (45.0%) of the principals were over 50 years of age. Equally, majority, (88.0%) were married. In addition, principals were requested to indicate their highest academic qualifications and years of service as principals. Most principals

13 (65.0%) had acquired Master of Education (M.Ed) degree against 7 (35.0%) who had a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree. None of the principals had a qualification lower than a university degree. This shows that all the principals had attained the minimum qualifications to head schools as required by the Teachers Service Commission. On the length of service as a principal, half of the principals (50.0%) had served for between 16 to 20 years. This was considered a long duration in service to have understood dynamics of school leadership.

The teachers who participated in the study were requested to provide their demographic information. The responses are tabulated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Teachers’ demographic information

Demographic	Classification	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	25	49.1
	Female	26	50.9
Age (years)	Below 25	7	13.7
	26 - 30	13	25.5
	31 – 35	10	19.6
	36 - 40	10	19.6
	41 -50	6	11.8
	Over 50	5	9.8
Highest professional			

qualifications

Diploma	5	9.8
B.Ed	25	49.1
PGDE	8	15.6
M.Ed	13	25.5

Teaching experience
(years)

Below 5 years	10	19.6
5 -10	10	19.6
11 -15	7	13.7
16 -20	4	7.8
21 -25	9	17.7
Over 25	11	21.6

n = 51

As indicated in Table 4.3, there was almost a gender balance (Male = 49.1%; Female = 50.9%) among the teachers who participated in the study. This indicated a fair distribution of teaching opportunities in the teaching profession. Majority 40 (78.4%) of the teachers were 40 years and younger; an indication of a youthful and strong teaching fraternity. Additionally, teachers were requested to indicate their highest academic qualifications. Almost half of the teachers 25 (49.1%) had acquired a Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree. None of the teachers had a qualification lower than a diploma in education. This shows that all teachers had attained the minimum qualifications to teach in high schools as required by the

Teachers Service Commission. On the length of service as a teacher, only 10 (19.6%) had an experience of below 5 years.

4.4 Description of the Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in the study was 'students' performance' as measured by Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). The Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) administers the KCSE examinations, which is a summative evaluation of learning at secondary schools level. The students are graded from grade A = 12 point to grade E = 1 point. Schools calculate their mean grade from the aggregate mean of the students' grades.

In the present study, an overall average school/students grade was calculated from the cumulative KCSE grades in the past five years based on self-reported grades provided by the school principals. The schools were categorised into three groups according to performance. A summary of the mean grades is presented in Table 4.4. The performance was reported as:

High performance: A =12, A- = 11, B+ = 10, B = 9, B- = 8

Average performance: C+ = 7, C = 6, C- = 5

Low performance: D+ = 4, D = 3, D- = 2, E = 1

Table 4.4: Self-reported school mean grades at KCSE

Mean grade	Frequency	Percent
A to B-	1	5.0
C+ to C-	7	35.0
D+ to E	12	60.0
Total	20	100.0

From Table 4.4, most students (60.0%) had a low performance of between grades D+ and E. Only 1 (5.0%) of the schools was categorised as a high performer. This shows that schools have not exploited students' full potential.

4.5 Relationship between Principals' Methods of Consultation in Decision Making and Students' Performance at KCSE

To establish the relationship between principals' methods of consultation in decision-making and students' performance at KCSE, principals and teachers were requested to respond to some questionnaire items pertaining to autocratic leadership style to show the extent to which it was applied in some situations in schools. They were expected to rate given statements using a five Likert scale; 5 = almost always true (AAT); 4 = Frequently true (FT); 3 = Occasionally true (OT); 2 = Seldom true (ST); 1 = Almost never true (ANT). The principals' responses are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Principals responses on methods of consulting in decision-making

Statement	RATING									
	AAT		FT		OT		ST		ANT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I always retain the final decision-making authority.	10	50.0	3	15.0	4	20.0	0	0.0	3	15.0
I always try to include one or more teachers in determining what/how to do it, but I maintain the final decision-making authority.	7	35.0	5	25.0	7	35.0	1	5.0	0	0.0
My staff and I always vote when a major decision is to be made.	0	0.0	3	15.0	13	65.0	0	0.0	4	20.0
I do not consider suggestions made by staff as I do not have time for them.	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	25.0	15	75.0
I ask for staffs' ideas in upcoming plans and projects.	5	25.0	7	35.0	7	35.0	1	5.0	0	0.0

n = 20

Results in Table 4.5 shows that a good percentage of school principals used autocratic leadership style in decision-making situations. Half of the principals 10 (50.0%) retain final decision-making authority, occasionally vote 13 (65.0%) when

a major decision is to be made and rarely seeks staffs' ideas in up-coming plans 5(25.0%). Lack of consultation could mean that such principals miss out on wealth of ideas and be stifling creativity and innovation among staff members.

Teachers were also required to indicate the extent to which they felt that their principals used autocratic leadership style and the method of consultation. On a scale of 1 – 5, they rated statements that indicated principals' autocratic leadership styles as: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Moderately Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, or Strongly Disagree = 1. The findings appear in Table 4.6 and 4.7.

Table 4.6: Teachers' responses on principals' autocratic leadership style

Autocratic leadership style	RATING									
	SA		A		MA		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The principal is often overbearing in his supervision of my work	5	0.8	10	19.6	10	19.6	20	39.2	6	11.7
The principal does not accommodate any kind of domestic excuse interfering with my wok	15	29.4	23	45.1	8	15.7	5	9.8	0	0.0
The principal wears an officious look most of the time.	7	13.7	8	15.7	14	27.5	12	23.5	10	19.6
The principal beliefs that I	20	39.2	12	23.5	8	15.7	6	11.7	5	9.8

work best when I am given clear and direct instructions of my job.

The principal rules with an iron hand	5	0.8	6	11.7	16	31.6	18	35.2	6	11.7
The principal does not readily accept ideas	15	29.4	10	19.6	19	37.2	7	13.7	0	0.0
The principal does not explain his actions	10	19.6	14	27.5	12	23.5	7	13.7	8	15.7

n = 51

As revealed In Table 4.6 almost a third of the teachers 15 (29.4%) strongly felt that principals do not readily accept ideas from other quarters. Another 14 (27.5%) agreed that they do not explain their actions and a majority 20 (39.2%) strongly agreed that principals feel that people work best when direct instructions are issued to them. These findings showed that some principals use autocratic style of leadership in running schools.

On whether principals seek others decisions on school matters, teachers had this to report as indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Teachers’ views on ways of principals’ decision-making

Statements	RATING									
	SA		A		MA		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Principal makes the decision and tells the	28	54.9	12	23.5	6	11.7	5	9.8	0	0.0

teachers										
Principal involves teachers in decision making	10	19.6	8	15.7	5	9.8	17	33.3	11	21.5
Principal consults teacher before making decisions	5	9.8	6	11.7	17	33.3	20	39.2	6	11.7
Principal is friendly/warm to teachers in decision making meetings	11	12.5	14	27.5	11	21.5	10	19.6	8	15.7
Principal does not convene decision meetings	5	9.8	6	11.7	6	11.7	14	27.5	20	39.2

n = 51

According to results indicated in Table 4.7, most principles exhibit autocratic leadership style in decision-making. Slightly over half 28 (54.9%) of the teachers had strong views that principals first make decisions and only communicate later, 17 (33.3%) disagreed that principals involve teachers in decision-making and another 20 (39.2%) equally disagreed that principals consult teachers before making decisions. When teachers feel left out in managing school affairs, they may become demotivated and demoralized. Such feelings lead to low teacher outputs that translates to poor learner performance.

The students were also required to indicate the way in which they felt principals made decisions in schools on school matters. The students' opinions are contained in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Students views on principals ways of decision-making

Statements	RATING									
	SA		A		MA		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Allows students to air their ideas	149	60.0	57	23.0	27	11.0	15	6.0	0	0.0
Have little time for discussions with students	50	20.0	20	8.1	34	13.7	82	33.0	62	25.0
Puts suggestions forwarded by students into operations	24	9.8	37	15.0	72	29.0	97	39.2	30	11.7
Holds regular meetings with students to discuss how they can improve	43	17.3	67	27.0	53	21.5	48	19.5	36	14.7
Asks students to do things politely, gives reason why they should be done and invites suggestions	67	27.0	72	29.0	29	11.7	68	27.5	12	4.8

As indicated in Table 4.8, most principals consult students and includes them in decision-making. Over half 149 (60.0%) of the students had strong views that principals allow them to air their ideas, 82 (33.0%) disagreed and strongly disagreed (25.0%) that principals had little time for discussion with them. However, a low percentage 24 (17.3%) felt that despite participation in decision – making process, their ideas were not operationalised. This may demoralize the students resulting to poor academic performance.

To find out whether the methods of principals decision-making were related to students’ performance in KCSE, a chi-square test of independence was performed. The findings are as indicated in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Relationship between principals’ decision-making and students’ performance at KCSE as reported by teachers

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.320 ^a	7	.384
Likelihood Ratio	25.832	7	.259
Linear-by-Linear Association	.316	1	.574
N of Valid Cases	20		

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.320 ^a	7	.384
Likelihood Ratio	25.832	7	.259
Linear-by-Linear Association	.316	1	.574
N of Valid Cases	20		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .20.

Results of the chi-square test of independence showed that the p value (0.384) was greater than the chosen significant level (0.05). Therefore, no association was found between methods of principals decision-making and students' performance at KCSE ($\chi^2 (1) > 23.320$, $df = 7$, $p = 0.384$). These findings disagreed with earlier ones of Waweru and Orodho (2014) found out that authoritative leadership style had a significant effect on school effectiveness (an indicator of student achievement) in public schools in Murang'a County, Kenya.

4.6 Principals Use of Interpersonal Skills and Students' Performance at KCSE

Interpersonal skills include a wide range of skills, such as communication skills, which covers verbal communication (what we say and how we say it) and non-

verbal communication (body language, tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures). Communication is central to any organisation. Therefore, school managers should ensure that everyone tracks toward the same purpose through open lines of communication.

To find out whether the way principals communicated had an influence on students' performance, teachers and students rated statements on a Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5; Agree (A) = 4; Moderately Agree (MA) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. In reporting the results, responses on strongly agree and agree were combined to mean democratic leadership style; disagree and strongly disagree to mean autocratic leadership style while moderately agree meant Laissez-fair style of leadership. Teachers' responses are tabulated in

Table 4.10: Teachers responses on the ways principals communicate information

Statement	RATING									
	SA		A		MA		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There are well spelt communication procedures in the school	15	29.4	8	15.7	4	7.8	16	31.4	8	15.7
Administrative matters are communicated well in	5	9.8	6	11.8	30	58.8	6	11.8	4	7.8

advance to teachers										
Teachers are informed about MoE policies well in advance	25	49.0	15	29.4	10	19.6	1	1.9	0	0.0
Teachers are involved in setting out communication procedures	7	13.7	8	15.7	12	23.5	10	19.6	14	27.6
Teachers are informed about vital school decisions well in advance	15	29.4	16	31.4	10	19.6	8	15.7	2	3.9

n =51

Table 4.10 reveals that 24 (47.1%) of the teachers disagreed that there were clearly spelt out communication procedures in their schools and almost a similar percentage (23 = 45.1%) agreed that clear procedures of communication existed in their schools. A similar percentage, 24 (47.1%) disagreed that teachers were involved in setting out communication procedures. These findings reflect autocratic leadership style in most schools. When communication procedures are not clearly spelt out, subordinates may lose direction and focus resulting to low morale. House (1968) in path-goal theory supports idea of clear means of communication to guide and direct subordinates. In the other item, administrative matters are communicated in advance to teachers, the respondents were non-committal. Thirty (58.8%) moderately agreed with the statement while 10 (19.6%) disagreed.

However, a large majority 40 (78.4%) agreed that teachers were informed about MoE policies in good time and an equally high number (31 = 60.8%) agreed that vital school decisions were communicated well in advance. This shows a democratic way of dealing with staff.

4.7 Principals' delegation of duties and students' performance

A leader cannot do all of the work for an organization and be successful at leading. In order to succeed, he should delegate authority by entrusting others to do parts of his jobs. Delegation of authority therefore means subdivision and sub-allocation of authority and powers downwards to the subordinates in order to achieve effective results. Cole (1996) describes delegation as a process whereby a leader or a senior officer cedes or entrusts some of his authority to subordinates or teammates to perform certain tasks or duties on his behalf. However, the manager or the senior officer remains accountable for those tasks or duties to his own superior officers.

Effective delegation ensures that more people are actively involved in activities, workload is distributed more evenly and an organization runs more smoothly and efficiently. The researcher explored the respondents' opinions on whether principals delegate duties or not. The results are in Table 4.11 and 4.12. A Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5; Agree (A) = 4; Moderately Agree (MA) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 was used to measure the responses. In reporting the results, responses on strongly agree and agree were combined to mean democratic leadership style; disagree and strongly disagree to mean

autocratic leadership style while moderately agree meant Laissez-fair style of leadership.

Table 4.11: Teachers’ responses on principals’ delegation of duties

Statement	Response					
	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Principal delegates student discipline matters to class-teachers, and Deputy Principal	46	90.2	5	9.8	0	0.0
Principal does not delegate any task to teachers	3	5.9	5	9.8	43	84.3
I am supervised by my principal on duties delegated to me	30	58.8	10	19.6	11	21.6
My principal delegates to me duties that I have no idea about	14	27.5	6	11.7	31	60.8
I am guided by my principal on how to perform the delegated duties	28	55	11	21.6	12	23.5
Principal delegates to me duties I have no experience on	12	23.5	7	13.7	32	62.7

n = 51

As it can be viewed from Table 4.11, majority 46(90.2%) of the respondents were in agreement with the view that principals delegated discipline matters to class teachers and deputy principals. However, 43(84.3%) of the teachers disagreed that

principals delegated duties to them. This meant that apart from student matters, principals rarely delegated other duties to teachers. This indicates an autocratic style of leadership.

Results also revealed that 28(55.0%) of the teachers agreed that they were directed by school principals on how to perform duties delegated to them. A good number 31(60.8%) disagreed that school administrators delegated to them duties they had no idea about or experience 32(62.7%). These findings agree with Lussier and Achua (2001) findings that a leader should provide direction and support in setting high expectations for work improvement and rewards subordinates when the expectations are met. If teachers are guided on how to perform the delegated duties, they become efficient and effective in performing what has been assigned to them (Bredeson,2006). Hence, the researcher concluded that proper direction by principals to subordinates is a characteristic of democratic leadership style and if done continuously, it would increase teacher productivity hence improved student performance.

To further find out whether principals delegated duties to others, the researcher sought students' opinions and their views are contained in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Students’ responses on principals’ delegation of duties

Statement	Response					
	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Displays confidence in students council delegated duties	221	89.1	2	0.8	25	10.1
Shares ideas with students on matters concerning students	149	60.1	50	20.2	49	19.7
Principal guides student council on how to perform the delegated duties	238	95.9	0	0.0	10	4.03
Principal delegates duties to students according to their abilities	135	54.4	73	29.4	34	13.7
Principal always rewards students when they carry out duties well	80	32.3	8	3.4	160	64.3

As it can be viewed from Table 4.12, majority 221 (89.2%) of the students agreed that principals had confidence that students’ councils would perform delegated duties as expected. Majority 238 (95.9%) also agreed that the principals guided students in the duties delegated to them and that they were assigned duties

according to their abilities 135 (54.4%). A good number 149 (60.0%) agreed that principals shared ideas on issues concerning students. However, 160 (64.3%) of the students disagreed that principals always rewarded them when they carried out duties delegated to them as expected. This indicates characteristics of democratic style of leadership. Unlike the teachers, students viewed the school principals as using democratic styles of leadership.

To answer the research question on whether there was a relationship between principals' delegating duties to others, and students' performance, the researcher conducted a chi-square test. The results are as indicated in Table 4.13.

Table 4.13: Relationship between principal delegating duties and students' performance

	Delegation of duty	Performance at KCSE
Chi-Square	128.609 ^a	199.957 ^b
df	11	2
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 11.5.

b. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 46.0.

The results of the chi-square test ($\chi^2 (2) > 128.609$, $p = 0.001$) showed that the p value (0.001) was less than the chosen significant level (0.05). The results,

therefore, indicated that when principals delegated duties, students' performance was likely to improve.

4.8 Influence of Principals' Domineering Behavior on Students' Performance

Domineering managers are common in most organizations, and they make workplaces seem, at times, like war zones. Domineering management styles include those in which managers use an autocratic, non-participative approach to leadership. Domineering managers can complicate your work, drain your energy, compromise your sanity, derail your projects and destroy your career. They divert people's energy from the real work of the organization, destroy morale, impair retention, and interfere with cooperation and information sharing. Their behaviour, can distort an organization's culture and affect people far beyond the point of impact. The results of domineering management vary by situation, but results usually include some positive and negative qualities.

To examine principals' domineering behaviour, teachers were asked to provide their views by rating given statements as: Strongly Agree (SA) = 5; Agree (A) = 4; Moderately Agree (MA) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. When reporting the results, the responses on strongly agree and agree were combined to mean democratic leadership style; disagree and strongly disagree to mean autocratic leadership style while moderately agree meant Laissez-fair style of leadership. Teachers' responses were as distributed in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Teachers' responses on principals' domineering behaviour

Statement	Response					
	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Principal will not change her opinions under any circumstances	26	50.9	4	7.8	26	50.9
Principal likes ordering people around	17	33.3	5	9.8	29	56.8
Emphasises that rules must be obeyed whatever the circumstances and punishes those who do not	28	54.9	13	25.5	10	19.6
Principal is insensitive to students needs and emotions	4	7.8	1	1.96	46	90.2
Principal reacts aggressively when challenged	10	19.6	10	19.6	31	60.8

n = 51

Table 4.14 shows that teachers were divided in their opinions as to whether principals were rigid in their opinions 26 (50.6%). Slightly over half of the teachers, 29 (56.8%) disagreed that principals like ordering people around while about a third 17 (33.3%) felt that they order people around. Majority also felt that principals emphasised adherence to rules under all circumstances and punishments were meted to those who broke rules. Almost all students 200 (80.6%) also felt that principals reprimanded students when they made mistakes and took note of

the mistakes made. This meant that most principals exhibited domineering behaviour at workplace. This indicates an autocratic style of leadership.

Although principals exhibited domineering behaviour, teachers believed that almost all principals 46 (90.2%) were sensitive to students' needs and emotions.; a view held by 223 (90.0%) of the students. Majority 31 (60.8%) also refuted that principals reacted aggressively when challenged. Hence, the researcher concluded that principals exhibited different behaviours according to circumstances.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION ANDRECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study investigated the relationship between principals autocratic leadership style and student academic performance at KCSE. This chapter summarizes the findings of the study, presents the conclusions and recommendations made based on the study. It also presents suggestions for further study.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and KCSE performance in Lari Sub-county. Specifically, the study sought to: establish the relationship between principals' methods of consultation in decision-making and students' performance; the influence of principals' use of interpersonal skills on students' performance; principals' delegation of duties and students' performance; and influence of principals' domineering behavior on students' performance.

Literature related to the study variables is thematically presented in Chapter Two of the study. The findings emanating from the reviewed literature provided conceptual and theoretical frameworks and directions for investigating the study. Both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms were employed in the

conduct of the study. Specifically, ex-post facto survey design was used to gain a holistic understanding on the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Ethical measures for the use of human respondents were assumed by voluntary consent to participate in the study by the respondents.

Public secondary schools provided the profiles of the study participants; 20 principals, 60 teachers and 252 students who filled out questionnaires. Simple random sampling techniques were utilised to select the study participants. Data were collected using anonymous self-administered semi-structured questionnaires. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies and inferential statistical; chi square analysis. The statistical significance was tested at alpha 0.05. A detailed discussion and description of the study results are presented in Chapter Four but a summary of the major findings is presented in this section.

5.2.1 Relationship between principals' methods of consultation in decision making and students' performance

Results on methods of consultation in decision-making showed that a good percentage of school principals used autocratic leadership style in decision-making situations. Half of the principals 10 (50.0%) retain final decision-making authority, occasionally voted 13 (65.0%) when a major decision was to be made and rarely sought staffs' ideas in up-coming plans 5(25.0%). Lack of consultation could

mean that such principals missed out on wealth of ideas and stifled creativity and innovation among staff members. When teachers and students feel left out in managing school affairs, they may become demotivated and demoralized. Such feelings lead to low teacher outputs that translates to poor learner performance. Results of the chi-square test of independence showed that there was no association between methods of principals decision-making and students' performance at KCSE ($\chi^2 (1) > 23.320$, $df = 7$, $p = 0.384$). This meant that other factors influence students' performance.

5.2.2 Principals' communication skills and students' performance

A number of analysis were done to find out if principals' communication skills influenced students' performance. It emerged that most principals employed autocratic leadership styles as indicated in their manner of communication to students and teachers. About half 24 (47.1%) of the teachers disagreed that there were clearly spelt out communication procedures in their schools. A similar percentage, 24 (47.1%) disagreed that teachers were involved in setting out communication procedures. These findings reflect autocratic leadership style in most schools. When communication procedures are not clearly spelt out, subordinates may lose direction and focus resulting to low morale.

5.2.3 Principals' delegation of duties and students' performance

From the study, it emerged that principals were very selective on the duties that they delegated to teachers and students. majority 46(90.2%) of the teachers

indicated that matters of student discipline were handled by deputy principals and class-teachers. However, as indicated by 43(84.3%) of the teachers principals rarely delegated other duties to teachers. This indicates an autocratic style of leadership. Results also revealed that 28(55.0%) of the teachers agreed that they were directed by school principals on how to perform duties delegated to them. If teachers are guided on how to perform the delegated duties, they become efficient and effective in performing what has been assigned to them. The researcher concluded that proper direction by principals to subordinates would increase teacher productivity hence improved student performance. The results of the chi-square test ($\chi^2 (2) > 128.609$, $p = 0.001$) indicated that when principals delegated duties, students' performance was likely to improve.

Unlike teachers, majority 221 (89.2%) of the students agreed that principals had confidence that students' councils would perform delegated duties as expected. This indicates characteristics of democratic style of leadership. Unlike the teachers, students viewed the school principals as using democratic styles of leadership.

5.2.4 Principals' domineering behavior and students' performance

Result on domineering behaviour shows that teachers were divided in their opinions as to whether principals were rigid in their opinions 26 (50.6%). Slightly over half of the teachers, 29 (56.8%) disagreed that principals like ordering people

around while about a third 17 (33.3%) felt that they order people around. Majority also felt that principals emphasised adherence to rules under all circumstances and punishments were meted to those who broke rules. Almost all students 200 (80.6%) also felt that principals reprimanded students when they made mistakes and took note of the mistakes made. This meant that most principals exhibited domineering behaviour at workplace. This indicates an autocratic style of leadership. Although principals to a large extent exhibited domineering behaviour, teachers believed that principals were sensitive to students' needs and emotions Hence, the researcher concluded that principals exhibited different behaviours according to circumstances.

5.3 Conclusions of the Study

A number of variables have been identified through research as impacting on students' academic achievement. In Kenyan public secondary schools, principals' leadership style seems to be such one determinant. The interactions of the study variables showed mixed results. Some characteristics of autocratic leadership style were seen to influence learner performance while others were neutral. This implies that for learners to realise academic success in schools, principals need to employ a number of leadership styles depending on what a particular situation or circumstance demands.

5.4 Recommendations of the study

Based on the analysis of the study and the literature reviewed, the researcher made the following recommendations.

1. The school administrators need to practice a variety of leadership styles to suit circumstances. The literature review and this study showed that school leaders who used a variety of leadership styles influenced learner performance positively.
2. Principals should wholly embrace participatory decision-making practices to give teachers and students a sense of ownership in school running.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between principals' autocratic leadership style and students' performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. Based on the limitations and delimitations of this study, the researcher make a number of suggestions for further research.

Studies should attempt to replicate the findings of this study. Scientific findings are only accepted by the scientific community only to the extent to which they are replicable. By replicating this study, researchers may clarify issues raised during analysis or extend generalisability of the results.

Case studies to track the impact of same principals leadership styles in different situations (schools) on student academic performance

Studies to establish efficacy of autocratic leadership style at various levels of study including primary, secondary and tertiary institutions in Kenya

A qualitative study to solicit information teachers and students regarding their opinions and observations about how autocratic leadership style influences students and staff performance would be a worthwhile endeavour.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Justine Wanza

P. O Box

The Principal

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi, Department of Educational Administration and Planning. I am undertaking a study on “*Influence of Principals’ Autocratic Leadership Style on Students’ Performance at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Public Schools in Lari Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya*”. Your institution has been selected to participate in the study. I humbly request for your permission to gather the required information from you and the students.

The attached questionnaire have been designed to assist the researcher to gather data for the purpose of the research only and identity of respondents will not be exposed. Respondents are kindly requested to respond to all items thoroughly and honestly.

Yours Faithfully,

Justine Wanza

Girls Day [] Mixed Boys and Girls Day []

Mixed Boys and Girls Boarding []

Any other (specify) _____

Part B: Students' performance

9. In the table below, please indicate the school's mean score and grade for the last five years.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Mean Score					
Mean Grade					

Part C: Administrative Tasks

10. The table below contains statements on administrative tasks. Next to each number, write the number that presents how strongly you feel about the statement by using the given scoring system. For each statement, put a circle (0) on the number that best represents your answer.

Administrative task	To what level of importance do you attach to each task?	How often do you perform each task?
	1. Low	1. Never

	2. Medium	2. Seldom
	3. High	3. Occasionally
		4. Frequently
		5. Always
Monitoring and supervision of curriculum and instruction	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Consultation with teaching staff	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Involving staff and students in decision-making	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Provision and maintenance of physical facilities	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Budgetary allocations	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Adherence to rules and regulations	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5

Rewards for hard work	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Demand for excellence irrespective of the resources available	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Supervision of support staff	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Chairing staff meetings	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5
Inducting new staff	1 2 3	1 2 3 4 5

Part D: Leadership style

11. The table below contains statements on leadership styles beliefs. Next to each number, write the number that presents how strongly you feel about the statement by using the following scoring system: 5 = almost always true; 4 = Frequently true; 3 = Occasionally true; 2 = seldom true; 1 = Almost never true

Statement	Almost always true	Frequently true	Occasionally true	Almost never true
I always retain the final decision-making authority.				
I always try to include one or				

more teachers/staff in determining what to do and how to do it. However, I maintain the final decision-making authority.				
My staff and I always vote when a major decision is to be made.				
I do not consider suggestions made by staff, as I do not have time for them.				
I ask for the staffs' ideas in upcoming plans and projects.				

12. Do you involve the community around your school in matters relating to your school?

Yes No

13. If 'Yes' in 13 above, give examples of the activities the school community is involved in.

14. Who prepares the school's block timetable?

Myself []

The Deputy Principal []

The Heads of Departments []

All teachers []

Others (please specify) _____

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

APPENDIX 3: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADS OF DEAPRTMENTS

Part A: Domineering Behaviour

1. The following statements indicate principals' domineering behaviour.

Please indicate whether you: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Moderately Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, or Strongly Disagree = 1 with the statements about your principal.

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
Principal will not change her opinions under any circumstances					
Principal likes ordering people around					
Emphasises that rules must be obeyed whatever the circumstances and punishes those who do not					
Principal is insensitive to students needs and emotions					
Principal reacts aggressively when challenged					

2. What leadership problems do you think your school experiences?

3. What areas of leadership/management in your opinion should be improved in your school?

4. Is there an active Students' Council in your school?

Yes [] No []

5. If 'Yes' in (5) above, state the activities in which the principal involves the council in:

6. Are you a member of the Students council?

Yes [] No []

7. If yes, for how long have you served in the council? _____
 terms

Part B: Principals Management Practices

8. You have been provided with different statements indicating principals' management practices. Please indicate whether you: Strongly Agree = 5, Agree = 4, Moderately Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, or Strongly Disagree = 1 using the following five-point Likert scale.

The principal:	5	4	3	2	1
Guides students on delegated duties					
Shares information on delegated duties readily with students					
Bases criticism/praise on opinions rather than facts					
Expects every student do his/her best and follow rules					
Displays confidence in students when she delegates duties to them whether he agrees with them or not					
Is sensitive to individual needs of students					
Shares ideas on delegated duties					

Allows students to air their views and ideas					
Shows no favour and treats all students equally					
Have little time for students					
Emphasises on excellent performance					
Puts suggestions provided by students into operation					
Does not try to change anything as long as things are working					
Expresses appreciation when students meet agreed upon standards					
Asks no more of students than what is absolutely essential					
Holds regular meetings with students to discuss how they can improve					
Reprimands students when they make mistakes and takes note					
Asks students to do things politely, gives reason why they should be done and invites suggestions					
Closely monitors students to ensure they follow school					

rules and regulations					
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THANK YOU FOR PROVIDING USEFUL INFORMATION